



**AMHERST COUNTY
PLANNING COMMISSION
MEETING**



MINUTES

January 16, 2025

Administrative Office Complex
153 Washington Street
Public Meeting Room
Meeting Convened - 7:00 PM

1. Call to Order

Members Present: Beverly Jones (Chair), Derin Foor (Vice Chair), Jim Thompson, Catherine Gamble, Michael Bryant, Emerson Bryant (Youth Participant - Non-Voting Member), Beyla Cunningham (Youth Participant - Non-Voting Member)

Members Absent: Michael Martineau, David Pugh (Board of Liaison Non-Voting Member) and Dan Sweeney (EDA Liaison Non-Voting Member)

Staff Present: Tyler Creasy (Director of Community Development) and Stacey Stinnett (Administrative Assistant)

Staff Absent: Sarah Nichols (Assistant Zoning Administrator)

Madam Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm

2. Invocation & Pledge of Allegiance

Beyla Cunningham led in prayer and then led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as submitted.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the agenda as submitted.

Motion made by: Gamble

Second: Thompson

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

4. Citizens Comments

There were none.

5. Public Hearing - Special Exception

A. 2024-683 Poplar Church

Request by Poplar Church for a special exception in the A-1, Agricultural Residential District. The purpose of the special exception is to allow a digital sign with lights of changing degree of intensity, brightness, and or color. The property is located at 1583 Richmond Highway and is further identified as tax map no. 112-A-26.

Mr. Creasy presented the staff report and concluded his comments by stating that staff recommended approval to allow for a free-standing sign with lights of changing degree of intensity, brightness or color with no special conditions.

Madam Chair Jones opened the public hearing.

No one spoke in favor or in opposition of the request.

Madam Chair closed the public hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to recommend to the Board of Supervisors approval of Special Exception 2024-683 at 1583 Richmond Highway to allow a free-standing sign with lights of changing degree of intensity, brightness or color..

Motion made by: Thompson

Second: Foor

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.

6. Battery Storage Presentation

A. Presentation

Mr. Creasy reminded the Planning Commission that in the fall of 2024, staff was directed to look into more information regarding battery storage. Mr. Creasy welcomed Eolian, American Electric Power and ESRG to tonight's meeting and stated that they would be giving presentations and answering the Commission's questions.

Sam Lines, Senior Vice President of Development for Eolian Energy, gave a brief PowerPoint and addressed the Planning Commissions questions and concerns.

Paul Rogers, with ESG, gave a thorough presentation on how this company would be responsible for training Amherst Counties firefighters in these battery storage facilities. Mr. Rogers answered the Planning Commissions questions and addressed their concerns regarding safety.

Austin Jeffries, Director for Renewable Operations for Appalachian Electric Power, stated that his job would be operating and maintaining the battery storage facility.

Rob Mann, External Affairs Manager for American Electric Power, spoke regarding how AEP is affiliated with the project and answered the Planning Commissions questions.

Mr. Creasy explained to staff that no action was necessary tonight. However, he would give the Commission a month to digest the information from tonight's meeting, then at the next scheduled Planning Commission meeting he would invite Amherst County's Public Safety Staff to attend to further discuss battery storage facilities.

Mrs. Gamble suggested to staff that a workshop may be more beneficial.

7. Old/New Business

There were none.

8. Site Plan Review

A. Site Plan Updates

Mr. Creasy gave the Planning Commission updates on the current site plans.

9. Approval of Minutes for December 19, 2024

A. Attachment

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to approve the December 19, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes as submitted.

Motion made by: Gamble

Second: Foor

Motion carried by a 4-0 vote. (Bryant abstained)

10. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Motion: Motion to adjourn.

Motion made by: Bryant

Second: Gamble

Motion carried by a 5-0 vote.


Chairman